
COP28. Milano: “A climate conference that will make or break the future of our planet”

The United Arab Emirates will host COP28 in Dubai from 30 November to 12 December. The event will bring together government leaders, representatives of civil society, industry and finance at a crucial time for the first assessment of the world's progress on the Paris Agreement. With scientists predicting that 2023 will be the hottest year on record, the UN Climate Change Conference takes on a special significance. SIR discussed the issue with Giuseppe Milano, Secretary General of Greenaccord.



[COP28 is likely to be more decisive for the future of the planet than previous conferences.](#)

[After a devastating pandemic crisis and a terrible war crisis that diverted public attention from the climate crisis, together with soaring residential and business energy bills and despite increasingly intense and frequent extreme weather events, we are now halfway between Paris COP21 and the year 2030, the deadline by which we must reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% to keep the global average temperature increase well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. However, according to the latest IPCC and UNEP reports, we could exceed the minimum safe threshold of 1.5°C in just over a year, and by the end of the century the global average temperature could be almost 3°C warmer due to the continued economic and political hegemony of fossil fuels. The host, the United Arab Emirates, is one of the world's largest oil producers, which is hardly reassuring for the success of the international summit. Yet virtually no COP is a foregone conclusion due to the complexity and difficulty of the negotiations. However, the upcoming conference is expected to look beyond the rhetoric of 'phase out' and 'phase down', and to build on the achievements of COP21 in Paris by both increasing emissions reduction targets and renewable energy deployment, and giving a boost to multilateralism and cooperation to unlock the \\$100 billion annual Loss & Damage Fund for populations in developing countries. **At previous climate conferences, participating countries agreed to limit global warming. Have these goals been met? If not, why not?** The economic and financial interests of the fossil fuel multinationals are very difficult to dismantle, partly because the international community is fragmented, lacks a common vision, and does not have charismatic political leadership capable of conveying the urgency of ecological transformation and of uniting private investors and social activists. Despite progress in decarbonisation and climate finance, albeit still limited, carbon dioxide levels are the highest in human history, to which we should add natural gas, which in recent years has become the main energy vector for the United States and the European Union, replacing oil and coal. Not only is the transition proceeding far too slowly, with insufficient national resources, but it also appears too burdensome and sometimes incomprehensible](#)

to the very people who are expected to implement it in everyday life. **Throughout history, the global climate has always been subject to change. Why has it become so controversial today?** Because for thousands of years, climate change followed a natural periodic pattern of peaks and troughs. Instead, over the past 80 years, we have seen an unprecedented increase in greenhouse gas emissions in cities - those urban areas where human industrial, commercial and social activities are concentrated.

The planet does not pollute itself, it is we who pollute and destroy the planet.

That is why today we must speak of anthropogenic climate change, and if we want to save the planet, we must re-educate ourselves to respect the fragility of our ecosystems by radically and urgently changing the way we live our daily lives. **Is climate change also an issue of human rights violations, given that the most vulnerable populations are the ones most affected and at the same time the ones least responsible for the environmental disasters we have witnessed in recent years?**

Yes, it is indeed the main issue, as the Pope himself says:

Without social justice, there can be no environmental justice! The most fragile and vulnerable populations are now the ones most affected by extreme climate events, even though they are responsible for less than 3-4% of emissions, while the United States, Europe, China and India are responsible for at least 80%. Pressure from African countries has led to the creation of the Loss and Damage Mechanism to ensure that all necessary mitigation and adaptation measures can be implemented with the funds provided by richer countries. If this financial instrument fails, there could be up to 140 million climate migrants in the next 15-20 years, with unprecedented and further geopolitical tensions. **The United Arab Emirates, which is hosting COP 28, is a major producer of fossil fuels. Is this an obstacle to the Conference's deliberations?** It could be. But the recent agreement between the United States and China, as well as the announced protagonism of the European Union, could change the cards on the table. I repeat: no COP is a foregone conclusion, because during the negotiations, which involve a large number of public and private actors whose interests do not always coincide, many elements come into play that can change the course of events. We will have to be patient and trust in the conscience of the leaders who are called to give authoritative and realistic answers to the young generations who do not deserve to live on a planet torn apart by the flames of adult greed. **What decisions could be taken at the Dubai COP that are essential to turn the tide?** The International Energy Agency reiterated this a few days ago: renewable energies, especially wind and photovoltaic, must at least triple within a decade to end the fossil fuel era once and for all, without neglecting the contribution that storage systems and digital technologies can make to increasing efficiency and security. In conclusion, COP28 would be a positive event if what international bodies such as the aforementioned agency and the IPCC have been saying for years were to be put on paper, and the ambitions of the 2015 Paris Conference were to be revitalised according to a globally agreed timetable of mitigation and adaptation measures to be implemented at an accelerated pace.

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